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Medical brochures translated into English in Spain

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Abstract

The aim of this conference is to present the results of an analysis of the text genre of medical brochures that have been translated into English and published in Spain. We will contrast the results of this work with those obtained in a previous study of original medical brochures both in English and Spanish. Here, we will try to determine whether the brochures translated into English in Spain are influenced by original Spanish brochures or whether, on the contrary, they comply with the features of the target culture. In order to extract the features of each language, we have worked with a corpus of 250 documents (100 brochures in Spanish, 100 in English and 50 brochures translated into English and published in Spain).

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Key words: contrastive analysis of the genre of medical brochures in English and in Spanish; brochures translated into English; original English brochures; original Spanish brochures; similarities and differences in the genre of medical brochures

1. Introduction

In spite of the high number of publications about medical texts and specialised translation, we have detected an important lack of research regarding medical brochures. These texts are more and more frequently used in health centres to transmit medical information to the general public (Busch Lauer 1995). In addition, the number of foreign tourists and residents in Spain has increased considerably in the last few years, resulting in an increase in the number of medical brochures being translated.

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A genre frequently presents different features in two cultures (Gamero 1998). For that reason, in our opinion, before translating a medical brochure, it is advisable to study in detail the features that this genre presents in the two languages that we are dealing with. In a previous study (Faya Ornia 2015), we used two linguistic corpora (brochures in English and brochures in Spanish) to observe the behaviour of medical brochures in both languages. In the present work, we continue that research line and have thus compiled a third corpus of medical brochures: documents translated into English and published in Spain. With it, we have tried to study the features of translated brochures and determine whether the appropriate changes have been made, or whether they have been influenced by Spanish texts.

In order to perform our analysis, we followed a model of analysis with a top-down approach which we also used in the previous contrastive study of original brochures. It is based on the functional model of Nord (2005) and we have completed it with the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) because of their contributions regarding visual material.

2. Model of analysis

The model of analysis that we have followed in this work is the same that we used to contrast original brochures (English and Spanish) in the previous work. This model is divided into two stages. In the first one we analyse formal aspects, while in the second one, linguistic issues are discussed. In the figure that appears below, exact elements which have been subject of analysis are mentioned.

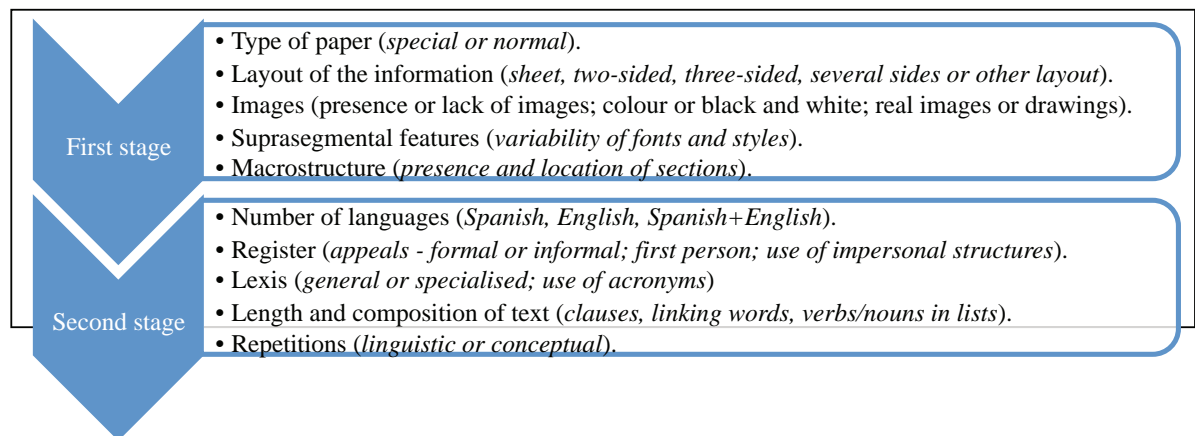


Fig. 1 – Model of analysis

2.1. Features of translated brochures

Like Spanish brochures, translated brochures are usually presented in a three-sided format. . However, a number of translated brochures in the format of ‘several sheets stapled’ have also been produced, potentially as a cost-reducing measure. As we observed during the compilation of our corpora, sometimes a brochure (or just a part of it) is translated using a word processor (such as Microsoft Word) and then printed directly, without any special editing process. In other cases, a health centre may translate a brochure after editing the format and then hand photocopies to other centres belonging to the same region as ‘several sheets stapled’.

Regarding the length of the brochures (particularly when they are structured as ‘book mode’) as well as the order of the sections, we can state that the data registered in the translated brochures is similar to that found in the Spanish

brochures of our corpus. An index is not included, and there is no legal information about the brochure, which was present in English brochures.

One of the main features of brochures translated into English in Spain is their simple design. On the one hand, the type of paper used is normal (without any bright colours or special thickness), as in the corpus of original English brochures. On the other hand, there are plenty of simple fonts and styles.

Although images are not present in all the translated brochures of our corpus, they are frequent both in the cover and in the body of the document. However, colour images are rare and brochures are usually printed in black and white. As with English brochures, real images prevail, a feature that gives formality and objectivity to the text. Unlike English brochures, a high percentage of pictures have been registered (it seems to be an influence from Spanish brochures).

The linguistic features of the translated brochures are similar to those observed in the English brochures. Firstly, acronyms are frequent (they seem to be a feature of the English language, since they frequently appear in it). Secondly, as a possible consequence of the paragraph structure, sentences are complex and contain more than two verbs. Most of the sentences are clauses or coordinate sentences. Consequently, a high number of conjunctions are used. However, in our opinion, it would be advisable to study sentence length in greater detail in the future, as we may get more conclusive results about length if we count words per sentence rather than the number of verbs.

Regarding the register, and contrary to what happens in English brochures, in translated brochures impersonal forms are preferred and there is little use of the first person (*I/we*). Lists are headed by both verbs and nouns, and repetitions are usually conceptual ones. This last idea should also be studied in greater detail in the future, since the type of repetition seems to be related more to the type of text and its function rather than to the language itself.

Finally, we would like to point out that among translated brochures, two or more languages have been registered. Co-official languages of Spain and other languages such as German, French, Arabic or Romanian are the most frequently used.

3. Conclusion

We have seen that translated brochures do not entirely match the corpus of English or Spanish brochures, but that they present features of both corpora. The influence of Spanish brochures on translated brochures is format-related, whilst English brochures have influenced them from a more linguistic perspective.

We believe that the fact that translated brochures include features of Spanish brochures is due to two reasons. Firstly, that with the aim of reducing costs, a mere linguistic translation has been performed. Secondly, that the translator is unaware of the features of English medical brochures and, consequently, has not implemented them in the translation. However, it could also have been a matter of 'loyalty' (Nord 1997) meaning that in some aspects the translator has had to be loyal to either the source text, the target culture or the conditions and/or restrictions that the translation initiator might have established (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006).

The lack of adaptation by translated brochures to the features of English brochures means that, on occasion these translations do not satisfy the needs of the reader (Mayor Serrano 2005). Therefore, in our opinion, it is advisable for the translator to be aware of the behaviour of a genre in two different languages (García Izquierdo 2002) and implement in the final text all the elements of the target culture, in order to produce a translation (House 1997) which conforms to the recipient expectations (García Izquierdo 2002 and Sánchez Trigo 2002). In order to achieve it, knowing the features of the genre (in this case, medical brochures) in both cultures the translator is working with (in this case, English and Spanish cultures) may be helpful (Firbas 1992 and Johansson 2003). This type of

contrastive analysis is important as translating involves contrasting cultures (Witte 1987, *apud* Nord 1997), so translated texts in which these changes are implemented are usually better accepted by their recipients and therefore comply with their function more efficiently.

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